

Proposed 2005-07 Policy Initiative

Name of Initiative	Increasing students' opportunities to be physically active
Sponsor	Dr. Charles Chu, Children's Health and Well-Being
Lead Staff	Tara Wolff
Other Committees	
Summary	Explore, develop, and adopt policy options for increasing students' opportunities to be physically active using the school setting.
SHR Strategic Direction	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain and improve the public health system <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure fair access to critical health services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve health outcomes and increase value <input type="checkbox"/> Explore ways to reduce health disparities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve nutrition and increase physical activity <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce tobacco use <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguard environments that sustain human health
Governor's Initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Cost Containment <input type="checkbox"/> Cover all Kids by 2010 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthiest State in the Nation
Possible Partners	
Criteria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does the issue involve multiple agencies? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can a measurable difference be made? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prevalence, Severity and availability of interventions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level of public input/demand <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does it involve the entire state? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the Board have statutory authority? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do the resources exist to deal with the issue? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does the Board have a potentially unique role?

Problem Statement

Current research findings and recommendations, including the *U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity*, *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines for School and Community Programs*, and *Healthy People 2010 Goals*, indicate consensus on the importance of regular, quality physical education and daily physical activity programs for all students, kindergarten through Grade 12. However, most school districts across the nation are not living up to these recommendations. The numbers are troubling: only about 25 percent of students attend physical education class daily or partake in any daily physical activity and the percentage of children who are overweight or obese has more than doubled in the last 30 years. According to a Survey Conducted by Opinion Research Corporation International of Princeton, New Jersey (for the National Association for Sport and Physical Education) 81 percent of adults believe that "daily physical education should be mandatory in schools." Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of teens agree.

Promoting a physically active lifestyle among young people is important because:

- Through its effects on mental health, physical activity can help increase students' capacity for learning.
- Physical activity has substantial health benefits for children and adolescents, including favorable effects on endurance capacity, muscular strength, body weight, and blood pressure.
- Positive experiences with physical activity at a young age help lay the basis for being regularly active throughout life.

Current state law (RCW 28A.230.040) requires that students in Grades 1–8 "shall receive instruction in physical education, as prescribed by State Board of Education rules." The Board's implementing policy (WAC 180-50-135(1)) requires all students in Grades 1–8 to receive an average of at least 100 instructional minutes per week per year in physical education, unless waived pursuant to RCW 28A.230.040.

Another state law (RCW 28A.230.050) requires high schools to carry into effect all physical education requirements established in rule by the State Board of Education. The current State Board of Education implementing policies (WAC 180-50-135(2) and WAC 180-51-060) require that a one-credit course or its equivalent shall be offered in physical education for each grade in high school (Grades 9–12). WAC 180-51-060, the Board policy on state minimum high school graduation requirements, includes satisfactory completion of two credits of health and fitness. (Information from *Report on PE Requirement* issues published by the State Board of Education in October 2002.)

In October 2002, the State Board of Education conducted an anonymous survey of school districts regarding compliance with the physical education requirement for Grades 1–8. They found that of the districts who responded to the survey 63 percent reported that they were in compliance and 36 percent reported they were not in compliance. The response rate was 135 districts out of a total of 296 (45 percent).

Potential Strategies

Convene a meeting with parties able to influence school policy (such as the State Board of Education and the State Board of Health) to discuss options for increasing physical activity amongst children. Examples of options for discussion could include:

- Promoting more compliance with PE requirements for Grades K–12.
- Strengthening PE requirements for Grades K–12.
- Promoting lifelong physical activity skills and habits.
- Providing time in all elementary schools for supervised recess.
- Providing opportunities and encouragement for students to voluntarily participate in before- and after-school physical activity programs.
- Offering joint school and community recreation activities.
- Providing opportunities and encouragement for school staff to be more physically active.

Criteria

Does the issue involve multiple agencies?

Yes, DOH, SBOH, OSPI, WSSDA, WASA, and SBOE.

Can a measurable difference be made?

Yes.

Prevalence, Severity, and availability of interventions

See Problem Statement.

Level of public input/demand

According to a Survey Conducted by Opinion Research Corporation International of Princeton, New Jersey (for the National Association for Sport and Physical Education) 81 percent of adults believe that “daily physical education should be mandatory in schools.” Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of teens agree.

Does it involve the entire state?

Yes.

Does the Board have statutory authority?

General authority to explore ways to improve the health status of the citizenry.

Do the resources exist to deal with the issue?

Yes.

Does the Board have a potentially unique role?

Yes.